THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • WEDNESDAY • MARCH 24, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW

newindianexpress.com

facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress

instagram.com/newindianexpress

INDIA SKIPS VOTE ON UNHRC RESOLUTION ON SRI LANKA

However, the resolution was adopted at the United Nations body as it garnered the support of 22 of the 47 member states

INDIA ASKS LANKA TO EMPOWER TAMILS

Eleven members voted against the resolution titled 'Promotion of Reconciliation Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka' tabled by the Core Group on Sri Lanka consisting of countries such as the UK, Canada and Germany. India, however, reiterated its demand to devolve political power to Tamils in Sri Lanka including holding early polls to provincial councils

GLOBAL PRESSURE TO PROBE WAR CRIMES

- The resolution calls upon the Sri Lankan government to ensure thorough and impartial investigation on all its alleged war crimes
- The resolution was moved after a scathing report released by the UN rights watchdog in January warned that Colombo's lack of accountability increased the risk of war crimes

14

COUNTRIES, INCLUDING INDIA, ABSTAINED FROM VOTING ON THE SRI LANKA RESOLUTION

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

K'TAKA SECOND WAVE BATTLE

2,010

HIGHEST DAILY SPIKE IN OVER 4 MONTHS

677

DISCHARGED ON TUESDAY

1,280 test positive in Bengaluru Urban, which also reported 3 deaths during the day

State witnesses a positivity rate of 2.03% for the day

Even as Covid-19 cases are increasing across Karnataka, scores of devotees throng the Kanaka Durgamma festival in Ballari city on Tuesday, flouting all safety and social distancing norms | EXPRESS

Vaccine eligibility for 45+ from next month: Cabinet

Move allows 30% of country's population to shield themselves

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

THE Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday approved Covid-19 vaccination for all citizens aged above 45 years across the country beginning April 1, adding an estimated 18-19 crore people to the beneficiary list.

By expanding the ambit, about 30% of the country's 1.3 billion population can expect to shield themselves against the pandemic.

The vaccines can be taken free of cost in government hospitals or by paying ₹250 per dose in private facilities.

"I appeal to every citizen who is 45 or above to register for vaccination," Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said after the Cabinet meeting. "This decision has been taken by the Cabinet on the basis of the advice of the coronavirus task force and experts," he said, assuring there is enough supply of vaccine to ensure immunisation of all eligible beneficiaries.

The expansion of the vaccination drive comes in the wake of what looks like a second wave of the pandemic in several states with chief ministers of Maharashtra, Delhi and Punjab, asking the Centre to let all above 40 or 45 years take the jab.

So far, nearly 4.85 crore across categories have got the shots, of whom about 80 lakh have completed the two-dose regimen. P10

40,715

New cases across India, 80.9% of which are from Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu

202.3

Case doubling time on March 23 as against 504.4 on March 1

TOP COURT ENDS MORATORIUM INTEREST RIDDLE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that compound interest on loans of all borrowers between March and August 2020 will be fully waived. This is nothing but a fiscal stimulus bearing an SC imprint and is, strangely, effective retrospectively. It may also be the first time interest-on-interest is being waived uniformly, which will cost the exchequer ₹15,000 crore. Of this, the Centre had presumably spent ₹5,500 crore.

Hearing a batch of petitions, a three-judge bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan refused to allow a complete waiver of interest on loans, which the government pegged at ₹6 lakh crore. Such a sum could charge the earth and seriously impact the financial health of a string of banks. The SC also refused to extend the moratorium period beyond August 2020

Last October, the Centre agreed to waive interest-on-interest component for retail and small business loans up to ₹2 crore for six months. The benefit was extended to MSMEs, education loans, housing loans, loans for consumer durables, credit card dues, auto loans, personal and professional loans and consumption loans. The waiver will now be extended to all borrowers. Any amount collected as compound interest shall be adjusted to the next instalments payable. The SC also lifted asset standstill on loans, which means, banks are now free to classify loans as bad if they deemed so and make recoveries. P13

'Fiscal policies not amenable to judicial review'

Noting that policy decisions are better left to the government and regulators, the bench said economic policies are not amenable to judicial review and court can't interfere unless there are malafides and arbitrariness

EXPRESS READ

Govt ups PF threshold limit to ₹5 L for tax-free interest

New Delhi: The government on Tuesday raised the deposit threshold limit to ₹5 lakh per annum in provident fund, for which interest would continue to be tax exempt. This would apply to those cases where no contribution is made by employers to the retirement fund.

SC to hear Parambir Singh's plea today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court will hear the plea of former Mumbai police commissioner Parambir Singh on Wednesday, which seeks direction for immediate "impartial and fair" CBI probe into alleged corrupt malpractices of Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh. Singh has also sought quashing of the order transferring him from the post of Mumbai CP, alleging it to be 'arbitrary' and 'illegal'.

5 DISTS SHOW HIGHER POSITIVITY RATE THAN STATE AVERAGE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

AS cases rise across the State, official data shows that the positivity rate in five districts for the past seven days is higher than the state's average.

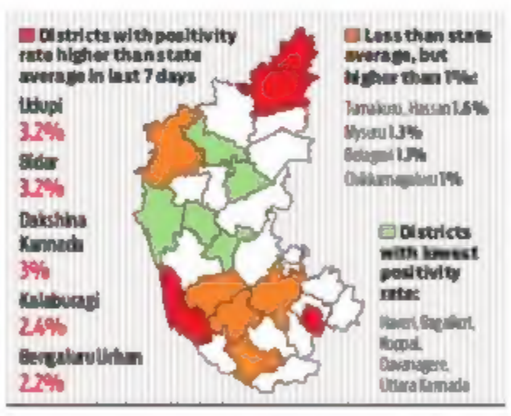
Karnataka's average positivity rate – the number of people testing positive as a percentage of total number of tests being done – for the past seven days is 1.6 per cent, but it ranged between 2.2 per cent and 3.2 per cent in Udupi, Bidar, Dakshina Kannada, Kalaburagi and Bengaluru Urban districts. Members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) suggested that these districts may have a higher positivity rate as some of them share their border with Kerala or Maharashtra, or they see a higher movement of inter-state travellers.

TAC Chairman Dr M K Sudarshan pointed out that though Udupi and Dakshina Kannada do not share their border with Maharashtra, they are impacted by the movement of people from the two states for business reasons. Many flights operate between Mumbai and Mangaluru, he added.

"Surveillance should also be done in Mysuru district as it shares a border with Kerala. The TAC has recommended that not more than 20 people should assemble for funerals, 100 for weddings in closed areas and 200 for weddings in open areas. These will be implemented soon by the State Government," he said.

Dr Giridhar R Babu, head of Lifecourse Epidemiology at the Public Health Foundation of India, however, said that a more nuanced understanding of the situation is warranted.

CONTINUED ON: P5


Districts with positivity rate higher than state average in last 7 days
Udupi 3.2%
Bidar 3.2%
Dakshina Kannada 3%
Kalaburagi 2.4%
Bengaluru Urban 2.2%
Less than state average, but higher than 1%:
Tumakuru, Hassan 1.6%
Mysuru 1.3%
Belagavi 1.3%
Chikkamagaluru 1%
Districts with lowest positivity rate:
Haveri, Bagalkot, Koppal, Davanagere, Uttara Kannada

> Surveillance should also be done in Mysuru district as it shares a border with Kerala
>
> Dr M K Sudarshan, TAC Chairman

BE SMART!
Take loan from formal institutions.
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
Here's why you should seek credit from formal institutions:
1 Banks and registered finance companies are regulated by RBI
2 Grievance Redressal in case of non-adherence to fair practices
RBI Kehta Hai... vittiya anushasan, chinta mukt jeevan
rbikehtahai
For feedback on this message, write to rbikehtahai@rbi.org.in
Issued in public interest by
भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
www.rbi.org.in

Shopkeeper tortures boy to death in Haveri

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Haveri

IN an inhuman act and that too over a snack that cost a few rupees, a 10-year-old boy was tortured to death by a shopkeeper at Uppanashi village of Hangal taluk in Haveri district.

The shopkeeper, who alleged that the boy stole a snack from the shop, kept the boy locked up in a room and tied a heavy stone to his back leading to his death at KIMS Hospital in Hubballi. The accused shopowner and his family members are missing now.

The boy, Harishayya – son of Nagayya Hiremath, visited Shivarudrappa Haveri's shop along with his friends around noon on March 16.

CONTINUED ON: P5

> Covid did not impact the flow of investments into the state. Corporate companies from the US, Singapore, the UK, Canada, Japan and others have come forward to invest in the state
>
> Jagadish Shettar, Industries Minister

Want SEZ chief's office in K'taka, says Shettar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE State Government has written to the Centre to shift the office of the Development Commissioner from the Cochin Special Economic Zone (CSEZ) in Kerala to Karnataka, as the state has the most number of 36 SEZs in the country.

"The Joint Commissioner's office is functioning out of Whitefield. We have written to the Centre demanding shifting of the Development Commissioner's office to Bengaluru," said Industries Minister Jagadish Shettar in the Legislative Council on Tuesday.

Replying to a question by JDS MLC KA Tippeswamy, he said the state has investment proposals worth ₹1.10 lakh crore, making it number one in attracting investors. The state has received foreign investments of ₹55,334 crore, ₹46,963 crore and ₹63,177 crore in financial years 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, respectively, while it has received ₹47,413 crore till February in the current fiscal.

"The Covid pandemic did not impact the flow of investments into the state. Corporate companies from the US, Singapore, the UK, Canada, Japan and others have come forward to invest in the state. Bengaluru Urban has 2,071 medium and large-scale industries, generating 4.86 lakh jobs, of which 3.61 lakh workers are residents of the state. We have made it mandatory for companies to employ only local residents for Group D positions in the Karnataka Industrial Policy 2020-25," Shettar said.